Outbreak Number: 2230-_____-_____

Outbreak Control Package for Child Care Centres

Updated August 2026

The information in this package reflects guidance current as of August 2026. As the guidance may change, please consult with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, or a Public Health Inspector for current direction.

Population at Risk

Number of ill children	Total children at risk	Number of ill staff	Total staff at risk

Note: Staff includes part-time staff, volunteers, students, etc.

Outbreak Assessment

Contact the Health Department immediately when there are two or more children/staff who are linked cases and experiencing symptoms of illness.

Respiratory Illness:

The Health Department is not declaring respiratory outbreaks in child care centres at this time.

Exclusions Related to Respiratory Symptoms:

All children/staff with any respiratory symptoms must remain home until at least **24 hours symptom-free and they have no fever**. See the Illness Exclusion versus an Outbreak document for further explanation. (https://www.durham.ca/living-here/child-care-and-early-years/operating-a-child-care-program/#Infectioncontrolpractices)

Enteric outbreak

An enteric outbreak will be declared when there are two or more linked “cases” within a **48-hour** period. The case definition would be any child or staff experiencing two (2) or more episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhea within a 24-hour period.

A Public Health Inspector (PHI) will be assigned to manage the outbreak (or suspect outbreak).

Date of first case: _____ Time: _____ ☐ am ☐ pm

Date of most recent case: _____ Time: _____ ☐ am ☐ pm

Healthcare Practitioner diagnosis: ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ unknown

If yes, diagnosis given: _____

Exclusions Related to Enteric Symptoms:

All children/staff with any enteric symptoms (regardless of whether they meet the definition of an enteric "case") must remain home until at least **48 hours symptom-free and they have no fever**. The assigned inspector will assess whether exceptions apply. See the Illness Exclusion versus an Outbreak document for further explanation. (https://www.durham.ca/living-here/child-care-and-early-years/operating-a-child-care-program/#Infectioncontrolpractices)

Assessing Food-Borne Illness:

PHI will inquire whether food samples or leftovers, served 72 hours prior to onset, are available for testing.

Note: If food is available, it must be kept on hold, under refrigeration, until the centre is advised they are no longer required. **Do not serve leftovers**.

Food Item	Date Prepared	Date Served	Person Preparing

Enteric Outbreak Kits

You may be provided with enteric outbreak kits to collect stool samples from ill child(ren)/staff, if recommended by the assigned inspector. Always request permission from the child's parent/guardian before the sample is collected/submitted, as they may receive the results. Contact the inspector as soon as kits are ready for pick up. Arrangements can be made to have kits delivered and picked up from a staff's/child's home upon request.

Each kit contains two vials/bottles. Please check expiry dates on all vials/bottles and do not use if expired. If expired, notify the assigned inspector immediately for replacement.

Instructions for Collecting Stool Samples:

1. Indicate the following information on the label for **each** vial:
   - Case's name
   - Date of birth
   - Date stool was collected

2. Complete the requisition form that comes with the enteric outbreak kit and place in outer pouch of specimen bag (do not store directly with vials). Include the following information:
   - Case's name
   - Date of birth
   - Date stool was collected
   - Onset date (date that child/staff first started experiencing symptoms of illness)
   - Outbreak number (Health Inspector will provide) **2230-_____-_____**
   - Health Card Number is not needed

Fill both vials with stool (feces) up to the line indicated on the side of the vial. It is acceptable to scrape feces from a diaper, clothing, or off the floor. If there is not enough stool to fill both vials, fill the white one first. If food poisoning is suspected, then fill the green vial first.

Enteric Outbreak Kits

Vial	**Test**	**Directions**
White cap	Viral and Toxin e.g. Norovirus	Add stool to line indicated. **Replace cap tightly**.
Green cap	Bacterial e.g. Salmonella	Using the spoon provided, collect two to three spoons full of stool, touching areas of blood, mucus, and pus. Mix well into transport media. **Replace cap tightly to prevent leaks**.

Note: Smaller amounts of stool can be collected for each vial if only limited amounts are available.

Return filled vials to specimen bag, refrigerate immediately, and store away from food. **Do not freeze**. Wash your hands after collecting stool and handling stool kits.

3. Contact the assigned inspector for pick up. The inspector will notify the child care centre of the lab results once received.

Responsibilities of Supervisor/Person in Charge

- General coordination of the outbreak management process with the Health Department and staff.
- Review the Illness Surveillance Form (https://www.durham.ca/living-here/child-care-and-early-years/operating-a-child-care-program/#Outbreakmanagementandreportinginchildcaresettings)
- Transfer the outbreak cases to the Outbreak Line Listing Template which will now be used daily to track the outbreak. Send the line listing form to the assigned inspector. (https://www.durham.ca/living-here/child-care-and-early-years/operating-a-child-care-program/#Outbreakmanagementandreportinginchildcaresettings)
- Audit staff to ensure that outbreak control measures are implemented properly.
- Initiate and maintain communication with staff and parents/guardians.

How to Use the Outbreak Line Listing Form

The outbreak line listing form is a tool that allows the Health Department to evaluate the progress of the outbreak, including the number of new cases that occur each day.

- List ill **staff** and **children** that satisfy the case definition on **separate** line lists (full names not required, use initials only). Ensure that all personal/confidential information is removed.
- List all cases **chronologically** according to onset date.
- Do not record a case more than once.
- Do not remove cases from the line listing once they are resolved.
- List individuals that may be linked to the outbreak but are not present (e.g. sick child/staff at home or hospitalized).
- Individuals with symptoms that meet the case definition, but have an alternative diagnosis by a healthcare professional, do not need to be included on the line listing.
- For enteric outbreaks, record the number of episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhea each individual has experienced (e.g. diarrhea x 2) in the “Comments/Diagnosis” column.
- Complete the “Last Date at Centre” column on the line listing for each individual.
- Update and email the line list(s) **daily** (Monday to Friday) to the inspector assigned to manage the outbreak.

Note: The Outbreak Line Listing Template can be found online at durham.ca/childcare

Outbreak Control Measures

The following infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures are to be posted and implemented immediately (as applicable) and they are to remain in place until the outbreak is declared over. Certain measures are required during non-outbreak situations, and these would continue after the outbreak is declared over.

Communication / Documentation

- Advise all staff and parents/guardians of the outbreak. The facility must post an Outbreak Control Sign at all entrances advising of the outbreak. (https://www.durham.ca/living-here/child-care-and-early-years/operating-a-child-care-program/#Outbreakmanagementandreportinginchildcaresettings)

Screening

- Child care centres are to passively screen the children and staff entering the child care centre. Parents should not be sending in their children if they are ill.

Symptomatic Individuals

- Symptomatic children must be immediately separated from others in a supervised area until they can go home.
- Staff should wear the proper PPE (i.e. face mask) while supervising symptomatic children and use proper IPAC precautions.

PPE

- Wear gloves when contact with blood and/or body substances (e.g. diarrhea, vomitus) is likely.

Equipment/Toy Usage and Restrictions

- Group sensory activities (i.e. water, sand, food) and the use of natural and plush/absorbent items are not permitted.
- Mouthed toys should be cleaned and disinfected immediately after the child is finished using them.
- Sunscreen should not be shared. Staff may apply sunscreen and should practice hand hygiene (e.g. washing hands before, between, and after each application).
- Label soothers, bottles, sippy cups, etc. with each child's name to prevent accidental sharing.

Food provision

- Family style meals are not permitted during outbreak.
- Staff must serve food using adequate food handling and safety practices.
- Utensils should always be used to serve food.
- Children should not prepare or provide food that will be shared with others.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Clean and disinfect the space and equipment used by a sick child, as soon as possible, after the child has left the area/been picked up. Use disposable cleaning equipment, such as disposable wipes, where possible.
- Contaminated items belonging to an ill child (including soiled clothing) must be sent home in a securely tied plastic bag for cleaning/laundering. Soiled items must not be rinsed or washed at the centre.
- Increase the frequency of environmental cleaning and disinfection, especially high-touch surfaces, to a minimum of **twice daily** (e.g. diaper change surfaces, toilet fixtures, sinks, faucets, countertops, toys, floor mats, tables, doorknobs, phones, keyboards, touch screens, computers, etc.).
- During an enteric outbreak you must provide a disinfectant product that includes a Norovirus kill claim on the product label. In the absence of an identified organism, you need to assume that Norovirus is the cause of symptoms, as it is commonly associated with enteric outbreaks in child care settings and it is extremely contagious at low doses.
- Sleeping equipment (e.g. cots, mats, cribs) and linens (e.g. cot/crib sheets, blankets) must be cleaned and disinfected/laundered daily and immediately when visibly soiled and contaminated.
- Ensure proper diapering procedures are being followed and designate cleaners/disinfectants for use only at the diaper table. Follow the steps on the Diapering Procedure poster. (https://www.durham.ca/living-here/child-care-and-early-years/operating-a-child-care-program/#Infectioncontrolpractices)
- Surfaces must be cleaned (detergent, warm water, applying friction) and rinsed **prior** to disinfection. Refer to the information sheet on Cleaning and Disinfection using Bleach https://www.durham.ca/living-here/child-care-and-early-years/operating-a-child-care-program/#Cleaninganddisinfection)
- Reusable cloths, used to clean and disinfect surfaces, must only be used once and must be laundered prior to reuse.
- Ensure manufacturer's label instructions for cleaners and disinfectants are followed (e.g. correct dilution, appropriate uses, contact time) and check expiry dates.
- If using bleach solutions, prepare daily as per the Cleaning and Disinfection using Bleach poster. During outbreaks, use a higher-level solution (5000 ppm = 10 milliliters bleach plus 90 milliliters of water, with a 10-minute contact time).

  Note: for convenience, another disinfectant, with a shorter contact time (e.g. 1-5 minutes) may be more appropriate.
- For all sanitizer/disinfectant products that require preparation/dilution, you must have appropriate test strips available to ensure that the products are mixed and maintained at the correct concentration.
- Personal belongings should be labeled and kept in each child's cubby/designated area (e.g. backpack, hats, mittens, etc.). Non-essential personal items (e.g. toys) should be minimized. Designate a space outside the centre to securely store strollers so that parents do not need to enter the centre.

Staff and Child Movements

- Movement of staff between child care locations is not permitted (including supervisors/ designates, staff, and/or students on educational placement).
- Movement of staff, assistants, and placement students between rooms/licensed age groups is discouraged to minimize potential for increased illness transmission.
- No admissions of new children are permitted.
- Movement/transitioning of children between rooms in outbreak is not permitted.
- Child care centre tours are to be deferred until the outbreak is over.
- Child care centres must still maintain their staff to children ratios during outbreak.

Hand hygiene

- Increase the frequency of hand hygiene for children and staff. Use the Handwashing poster and Hand Sanitizers poster to ensure all the required steps are followed. Hand hygiene refers to handwashing or the use of hand sanitizer, depending upon the situation. (https://www.durham.ca/living-here/child-care-and-early-years/operating-a-child-care-program/#Keepinghandsclean)
- Handwashing is required for the following:
  - after toilet use
  - after diaper changing (staff and children)
  - after contact with blood or body substances (e.g. mucous, vomit, feces)
  - before preparing and serving food
  - before and after eating snacks and meals
  - before feeding children
  - whenever hands are visibly soiled
- Hand sanitizer is permitted as long as hands are not visibly soiled. The use of hand sanitizers on infants and toddlers is not recommended. Check expiry dates on the bottles and discard hand sanitizer products if expired.
- Provide and use a 70 to 90 percent alcohol-based hand sanitizer or other Health Canada approved hand sanitizer, in each room and stored out of children's reach. (https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/hand-sanitizer.html)

Staff training

- Ensure staff are trained on IPAC policies and procedures, including instructions on:
  - how to properly use PPE
  - how to properly clean and disinfect the space and equipment
  - how to ensure daily screening is completed
  - how to keep daily attendance records
  - what to do when someone becomes sick, and how and when to report an outbreak